UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1996/332
3 May 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 2 MAY 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF RWANDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon my Government's instructions, I have the honour to forward to you herewith a document from our national news agency, the Ministry of Information, providing an overall and accurate picture of the important role played by the Government of Zaire in its ill-motivated efforts and manoeuvres to destabilize the Great Lakes region as a whole (see annex).

I should be extremely grateful if you could circulate this letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Manzi BAKURAMUTSA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
Rwanda to the United Nations

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Annex

The role of the Government of Zaire in the destabilization of the Great Lakes region

The events that have been unfolding in the north Kivu region of eastern Zaire have shocked many in the international community. This long-term cynical behaviour of the Zairian Government should be condemned by the entire world and urgent actions to stop this human tragedy ought to be taken without delay.

Forcible eviction of Kinyarwanda-speaking Zairians

The forcible eviction of Kinyarwanda-speaking citizens of Zaire is clearly in keeping with the strategy of destabilizing the Great Lakes region on the part of the Government of Zaire. The persecution of Kinyarwanda-speaking Zairian nationals of North Kivu with the connivance of Rwandan officials is not a recent development. This harassment campaign started back in 1993. This has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of innocent victims. Presently, the genocidal leaders with Interahamwe militia are actively involved in a well-coordinated campaign to displace the Kinyarwanda-speaking Zairians from their own land and property. With the approval of Zairian Government officials. Rwandan vehicles looted by former leaders of the genocidal regime in Rwanda are now being used in the operation to dump the Kinyarwanda-speaking Zairians across the border into Rwanda.

Refugees fleeing the area point out that attacks against them have been carried out by Interahamwe militia with the support and participation of Zairian government troops with the overt blessing of Zairian civil authorities. The militia have long resisted any possibility of settling them away from the Rwandan border. It is from these border points that they have carried out raids on Rwandan territory which have claimed the lives of many innocent civilians in the prefectures of Cyangugu, Kibuye, Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, as well as causing substantial material damage. Similar cross-border incursions by ex-Rwanda government forces and Interahamwe militia who perpetrated genocide in Rwanda are equally decried by Burundian authorities who affirm that these criminals are involved in horrors rocking many parts of their country today. The attack on 22 April on Kisoro Town in the Kabale District in Uganda by the same genocidal forces from refugee camps in north-eastern Zaire is part of the larger plan of the Government of Zaire to set ablaze the entire Great Lakes region. The refusal by the Government of Zaire to settle the Interahamwe militia away from the border areas clearly violates the Geneva refugee convention which stipulates that a host country shall not allow refugees to settle along the borders of their country of origin - Rwanda in this case.

The involvement of the Interahamwe militia gangs in violence in North Kivu has the support of the Rally for the Return of Refugees and Democracy (RDR), a political grouping of former Rwandan government officials and military who have ganged up for the purpose of obstructing the return of refugees and for extracting amnesty concessions for all those involved in the holocaust in Rwanda. The RDR, which has seen its disinformation campaign aimed at preventing

the return of refugees collapse, has opted for the current cynical initiative of harassing Kinyarwanda-speaking citizens of Zaire with the aim of evicting them from their land and property, thus paving the way for the 1994 refugees to occupy their land, in a bid to defer their return to Rwanda.

Support for former Rwandan officials accused of crimes of genocide and for other extremist elements

After the completion of genocide in Rwanda in July 1994, all those involved in the planning and execution of the holocaust were granted safe haven by the Government of Zaire. The entire former Government which planned and supervised genocide in Rwanda along with the former army and Interahamwe militia, established themselves in eastern Zaire. The role of the Government of Zaire and the support it has extended to the former Government of Rwanda and its army and militia in their efforts to destabilize Rwanda is a matter of record. The visible hand of the Government of Zaire in the activities of the officials of the former Rwandan Government aimed at training soldiers, acquiring arms and infiltrating Rwandan territory have been documented by numerous international organizations: Amnesty International, Africa Watch, Africa Rights and, most damning of all, the United Nations Security Council report of April 1996. According to Mr. Joost Hiltermann of the Human Rights Watch Arms Project in Washington: "Arms are going to Hutu militias belonging to both Rwanda and Burundi .... The danger of destabilization of the whole region is very high."

United Nations investigators as well as human rights and media organizations have pointed out the existence of military bases for former Rwandan soldiers and militia in such camps as Kamanyora, Panzi and Mugunga, with the full knowledge and support of the Government of Zaire. Extremists of all stripes in the region have found a home and support in Zaire. These include not only those responsible for genocide in Rwanda, but also those calling for a similar holocaust in Burundi, Leonard Nyangoma being one of the most vicious elements of this category of hate mongers, with Sendegeya and Jerome Ndiho the most ferocious proponents of the ideology of exclusion and extermination, according to which one ethnic group by virtue of its natural majority was born to rule the others, to the point of extermination.

Hate media campaign

The role played by the mass media during the genocide campaign in Rwanda cannot be overemphasized. Hate media organizations spearheaded by RTLM radio station and the newspaper Kangura played a pivotal role before and during the process of genocide in Rwanda. These are media organizations that publicly called for the extermination of Tutsi in Rwanda as a "final solution". Presently, a hate radio station Rutomorangingo, modern day version of RTLM, is freely operating on the Zairian territory, disseminating the same hate propaganda in the Great Lakes. Extremist reporters and journalists who worked on RTLM are currently actively involved in similar campaigns on this radio station. The message is clear and familiar - the extermination of Tutsis from the region. According to the report by the United States Committee for Refugees: "The impressive propaganda skills of the exiled regime sparked the

murder of up to 1 million persons and helped persuade nearly 2 million refugees to flee Rwanda. Those same propaganda skills are now helping perpetuate a refugee crisis and regional instability."

Refusal to apprehend and hand over wanted genocidal criminals

Most of the political, military as well as militia leaders wanted by the International Tribunal for Rwanda are currently free residents in Zaire. While other countries have recently moved to apprehend these criminals involved in the Rwandan holocaust, specifically Zambia and Cameroon, the Government of Zaire has clearly indicated that it is not prepared to hand them over to the Tribunal or any other jurisdiction for that matter. Instead the leadership in Zaire has called for a blanket amnesty for the authors of genocide in Rwanda, clearly advocating impunity - a factor that has led to frequent mass killings that culminated in full-blown genocide in 1994, which is also at the root of current problems in neighbouring Burundi.

While there is every indication that the Government of Zaire has connived with former Rwandan officials in obstructing the return of Rwandan refugees who fled there in 1994, it is now involved in a sinister campaign to evict its own Kinyarwanda-speaking citizens from their own country. This blatant victimization of its own citizens goes along to fit the Zairian Government line of destabilizing the Great Lakes region.

In the past, international human rights and other organizations have called for sanctions against the Government of Zaire. Given the continued intransigent attitude of the regime in Kinshasa, the international community should seriously pursue the proposal and send a clear message to the leaders in Zaire that the world is not prepared to stand by while the Government of Zaire is creating insecurity in the entire Great Lakes region.